

Part 1 - First steps to economic safety

Safety: Some of these steps may not be possible. Only take the steps you feel safe to take.
In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)

If you are thinking about leaving an abusive partner, and you want to establish some financial independence, here are some steps to consider taking first.

1

Create a free, private email account

Having a private email address is a great way to quietly communicate with a range of organisations. You will also need an email address if you want to set up a bank account online, so it is important to have one that your partner is not aware of. To reduce the chance of your new email address being discovered, set up your new account on a device that your partner does not have access to, for instance, a friend's phone or computer. Consider a secure and encrypted free email provider like [ProtonMail](#).

2

Gather important documents

If it's safe to do so, secure important documents such as passports and birth certificates or take copies of these documents. Digital photos or copies can be stored online by emailing them to yourself using your new, private email address or using a free, online storage platform like Google Drive. Alternatively, the documents could be left for safekeeping with a person you trust.

** For a detailed checklist of documents to consider getting copies of, see next page.*

3

Open a bank account in your name only

If you leave your partner, it will be important to have a bank account that your partner doesn't know about and can't access. Your pay or benefit payments can then be paid to this account. To open a new bank account you will need to have two forms of identification, a safe postal address, an email address and mobile phone number. We recommend opening an account where you are not already a customer to reduce the risk of accidental disclosure to your partner. **** If you are not an Australian resident or your partner has prevented you from accessing your ID, see next page for more information.**

4

Save some money

If possible, deposit money into your new bank account. If you're unable to open a bank account, consider if a friend or family member may be willing to look after some of your money for you.

If you are leaving your home because of domestic violence, you may be eligible for a Crisis Payment from [Centrelink](#). This needs to be claimed within 7 days of leaving. Call Centrelink on 132 850 or if you want to speak with Centrelink in a language other than English, call 131 202.

5

Get support

If you are considering leaving an abusive partner, there are organisations that can assist you to plan your next steps. There is also a range of support available to help you escape and rebuild from economic abuse. Visit the [CWES Directory](#) of Information & Services for more details.

To talk to someone about your options, call the national domestic and family violence helpline 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732). If you want to use an interpreter to speak with someone at [1800RESPECT](#), call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 first.

First steps to economic safety

FURTHER INFORMATION

* Important document checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport (including your children's) | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit card statement/s |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificate (yours and your children's) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank statement/s |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers license | <input type="checkbox"/> Title deeds for any property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage statement/s |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered relationship certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal loan or car loan statements or contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Centrelink (Services Australia) correspondence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any court documents or court orders | <input type="checkbox"/> Binding financial agreement (prenuptial agreement) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare card | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters from debt collectors or other creditors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MyGov account/login details | <input type="checkbox"/> Payslips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superannuation account details (yours and your partner's) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Return or Notice of Assessment from the Australian Tax Office |

Additional documents checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will | <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity, gas and water bills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney document | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone bill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enduring Power of Attorney document | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet bill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship | <input type="checkbox"/> Property rental agreement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Care Directive | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor vehicle registration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance documents: House, car, health, income protection, life | <input type="checkbox"/> Company registration (for any personal or family business) |

** Opening a bank account

- If you are not an Australian resident, you will need to declare your overseas tax residency and provide your Tax Identification Number or equivalent.
- If your partner has prevented you from having your identification documents, banks can use alternative methods to identify you. This will require you to open an account in person or over the phone.
- If you do not have a safe address to use, you will need to speak to the bank about options. Ask if the bank has a specialist team you can talk to about the domestic violence and economic abuse you are experiencing.